[Oct. 9, 1998]

THE WEEKLY UPDATE

blocks o' wood style

by Lydia Linker & Lee Montgomery

Vol 2, Issue 3

This week, continuing on the theme of respect first brought up in his last article about high staff turnover, Lee Montgomery discusses-

ELLA KING-TORREY'S VISIT TO THE STUDENT UNION

On Thursday, October 8th, with very little notice, the art institute's president, flanked by her development director and special events coordinator, managed to get included in the agenda for the student union. In fact, at their request, they even managed to make themselves the first item on the agenda. I think it appropriate to mention here that when I asked to be put on the agenda for a full board meeting that was going to involve a vote on an increase in student tuition last year, my request was rejected. At that time, I was supposedly considered a board member.

The motivation of this meeting was to discuss with students the importance of fund-raising. As far as I could tell, there wasn't a student in the room that was opposed to the idea that fund-raising is a necessary part of the support of this institution. Yet the lecture continued. Ella explained that she "was hurt" by graffiti she had read in one of the bathrooms, and a general sense of discontent she had sensed from students at the institute during the International Art Expo event that was held in our own Diego Rivera gallery.

A few comments:

The only specific motivation for Ella's visit seems to have been a specific piece of graffiti found in a specific bathroom. Other than that it seemed to be an unspecified sense of malaise that inspired the visit. For an administration that just months ago was trying to announce a need to decrease graffiti, this particular response to a particular piece of graffiti seems to me little more than a validation of the power of writing on the bathroom walls. I say this with the profound belief that there are better forms of self-expression in the world than graffiti, but if writing on the bathroom walls is the best way to get a direct reaction from our school's administration, maybe we should just start printing this rag on toilet paper.

Secondly, the group of individuals typically assembled at a student union meeting are not those most likely to be found scribbling on bathroom walls. Telling us how much she was "hurt" by these types of comments simply served as an attempt to inspire guilt in a group of students that, at least prior to this meeting, were probably the closest thing she had to allies in the student body.

And finally, an issue that I tried to bring up in the meeting was that individuals who may have expressed bitterness about fund raising efforts likely were not responding just to the fund raising effort itself. My interpretation of any sense of discontent directed at fundraising events is that students feel that with all of the energy that is devoted toward fund raising, there isn't nearly as much energy directed toward showing the students that they are indeed appreciated or, more importantly, even respected by the administration. The first time our president addresses the student body at large in the school year it is to essentially scold them for not appreciating her fundraising efforts. This comment was somehow turned into a fruitless discussion of the fact that student's were not invited to the events.

In a recent posting to an artists internet mailing list, Tapio Makela reviewed a conference on the Baltic region that was held in Stockholm where discussion was particularly one-sided. In that review, he explained that "(i)n order to establish a dialogic space, the first condition is to respect the partners in this dialogue as equals, as subjects with their own voice, and to provide the space for them to express it." Our circumstances here at the art institute are not nearly as critical or complex as those in the Baltic region, so why is it so difficult for us to open up this dialogue.

I can't speak for every student, staff and faculty member on campus, but I can say to the president of our illustrious institution, that I personally respect her ability to raise funds for the continued growth of the art institute. However, I hope that she will not be so quickly hurt by some of the more critical remarks made by me and my fellow students. If our president hears or reads the remarks of a discontent student in the future, it is my hope that she will simply and respectfully take the time to consider that these remarks are not meant simply to "hurt" her, but are in fact opportunities for her to learn what it is that students want either from her or from the institute she presides over.

I get the sense more and more that the non-administrative community of the art institute is falling into a state similar to that of the child that feels neglected by a parent that is so committed to making money for the family's future that the parent has lost the ability to relate to it's child. Young children who survive such neglect frequently become very rebellious adolescents.

Back of the weekly update (also blocks o' wood style)

TURNOVER WATCH: '98

Here's the list:

ROY RAMSING, film dept.. manager
JIM SIEBERT, film tech. asst..
JACLYN WHITE, film repair technician
EDUARDO MORRELL, A/V evening tech
JOHN SAPPINGTON, CDM site manager
TOM LAPORTA, head of maintenance
FRANK BARFIELD, maintenance foremen
JEANNIE WIEFFENBACH, Director of exhibitions
DINA SORENSON, general services manager
TRISH HERMANN, human resources
CHRISSY GODFREY, dir of human resources
PATRICIA GRICE, vice president for administration
ROSANNA DeROBLES, exec... asst.. v.p.....
JUDY CHAPMAN, director of student services
DANNY SHORAGO, general services asst...
CATHERINE LIPSETZ, clerical asst..
BARBARA KIMPORT, development director
LARA PETERS, development asst.
SARA BREMER, development assoc./events manager
PRUDY KOHLER, special assistant to the president

Again we should mention that all of these people left the art institute in the last two years.

A few explanations are in order here. Given our limited facilities "the Weekly Update "sometimes is not as diligent in it's proof-reading as it would like to be.

Some names on this week's list were not on the list last week, though the individuals mentioned left the institute significantly more than two weeks ago. We imagine that the list may continue to grow over the next couple of weeks, though (hopefully) not too significantly.

You may also notice that some of the job titles are worded differently. The titles in this list match the titles listed in the 1997-98 official staff list. Note particularly, Catherine Lipsetz. "the Weekly Update" Would like to say that she probably deserved her previous title, but the one listed here is the official one.

ERRATA

In our first issue Lee stated that "Judy Chapman still has not been replaced." At the time he wrote that line it was a true statement, however by the time we made it to press Lori Silver had been offered, and accepted, the position of director of student services. She seems quite nice, and should be welcomed with open arms.

Lee still says that unless Lori Silver is someone's incarnation of the divine here on earth, she's got some awfully big shoes to fill.

And he thinks Lori seems pretty cool.

THIS SPACE WILL BE FILLED WITH YOUR SUBMISSIONS

Mailboxes you can submit to:

The Philistine
(in the mail room)

Lydia Linker
(BFA)

R. Lee Montgomery
(MFA)